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Borough of South Molton

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Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Sanitary Inspector

FOR THE

Year ended December 31st, 1953.

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113, East Street.

South Molton,

May, 1954.

To His Worship the Mayor, Aldermen and

Councillors of the Borough of South Molton.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the Health and Sanitation Administration of the Borough for the year 1953.

Your obedient Servant,

F. J. H. MARTIN,

M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H. (Oxon.)

Medical Officer of Health.

South Molton Borough

LIST OF STAFF

The Staff of the Public Health Department consists of:—

Part-time Officers:—

F. J. H. MARTIN,
M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H. (Oxon.)
Medical Officer of Health.

Mrs. ELWORTHY, Clerk.

A. J. C. NEX, C.R.S.I.
Additional Sanitary Inspector.

Whole-time Officer:—

H. SETTLE, M.S.I.A., C.R.S.I.
Chief Sanitary Inspector.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (in acres)	5,910
Population	3,105
Number of Inhabited Houses	1,045
Rateable Value	£17,761
Sum represented by a penny rate	£70

Vital Statistics.

	Males	Females	Total
LIVE BIRTHS—Legitimate	17	20	37
Illegitimate	1	0	1
			38

Rate per 1,000 population 12.2

	Males	Females	Total
STILL BIRTHS—Legitimate	0	0	0
Illegitimate	0	0	0
			0

Rate per 1,000 Live and Still Births .0

	Males	Females	Total
DEATHS	18	24	42

Death Rate per 1,000 population 13.5

This figure includes 7 deaths that occurred at Beech House during 1953, of these 5 were non-residents of South Molton. If these 5 are excluded the local Death Rate is 11.9.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

	Males	Females	Total
Puerperal Sepsis			0
Other Puerperal Causes ...			0

Below I append a Table showing the comparative figures for South Molton Borough and England and Wales.

The Local Birth Rate and the Local Death Rate are both shown corrected by the area comparability factors.

Rate per 1,000 population			Death Rate per 1,000 population	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	
	Live Births	Still Births		Deaths under 1 year	Deaths from Diarrhœa and Enteritis under 2 years
S. Molton Borough ...	14.3	.0	10.5	50.2	.0
England and Wales ...	15.5	.35	11.4	26.8	1.1

Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	0	0	0
			2

Rate per 1,000 Live Births 50.2

Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks.

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	0	0	0
			2

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
Deaths from Diarrhœa under 2 years of age ...	0

Causes of Deaths during the year 1953.

	Males	Female
Malignant Neoplasm of Stomach ...	1	0
Malignant Neoplasm of Lung	1	0
Malignant Neoplasm of Breast	0	1
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasm	1	5
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System ...	0	3
Coronary Disease	1	1
Hypertension with Heart Disease ...	0	1
Other Heart Diseases	6	4
Other Circulatory Diseases	1	2
Influenza	1	0
Pneumonia	0	1
Bronchitis	2	2
Pregnancy	0	1
Congenital Malformation	1	0
Other defined and ill defined Diseases ...	1	3
Accident	1	0
Suicides	1	0
	18	24

Tuberculosis—Cases notified during 1953.

Pulmonary—One case, a Female aged 34.

Non-Pulmonary—No cases were notified.

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified in 1953.

Age Years		Measles M	Measles F
0—1	...	—	1
1—2	...	5	—
2—3	...	4	6
3—4	...	3	3
4—5	..	9	2
5—10	...	19	19
10—15	...	—	—
15—20	...	1	—
		41	31

Two cases of Puerperal Pyrexia were notified during the year.

Local Deaths over 65 years of age.

65—69	...	...	4	85—89	...	...	5
70—74	...	...	7	90—94	...	...	0
75—79	...	...	1	95—100	...	...	0
80—84	...	...	6				

Total ... 23

General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

1. TUBERCULOSIS.

Hawley Sanatorium, situated in the Borough of Barnstaple has 29 beds.

2. MATERNITY CASES.

The Devon County Council are continuing to act as they did in 1949 as agents of the Regional Hospital Board until the Board has completed its own plans for the treatment of Maternity cases. The South Molton and District Cottage Hospital continues to function under the North Devon Hospital group and deals with a certain number of maternity cases. Beds are set apart for these cases in the Hospital.

There is also a ward of 12 beds with a fully qualified staff at the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple, available for maternity cases of doubt and difficulty.

The General Practitioners' Maternity Unit of 13 beds is now open at "Highfield," Victoria Road, Barnstaple.

3. ISOLATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Cases are sent either to Whipton Hospital, near Exeter, or to the North Devon Isolation Hospital, which is situated just outside the Borough of Bideford. It is of recent construction and well equipped in every way for the treatment of Infectious Diseases. A separate block for early tuberculosis cases from North Devon is also available at this Hospital.

4. SMALL POX.

The Small Pox Hospital, to which cases of Small Pox will be sent is at Upton Pine. Telephone to Isolation Hospital, Whipton, Exeter 67158, and this is the same number for the ambulance.

5. GENERAL.

The South Molton and District Cottage Hospital, situated in the Borough of South Molton serves this area. There are 7 beds for general and maternity cases. The North Devon Infirmary, situated in Barnstaple also serves the area and provides modern medical and surgical treatment. In South Molton there are also chronic sick patients at Beech House, but no further admissions are being made.

6. CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

V.D. Clinic.—This is held at the Annexe of the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple.

Sessions.

Females Monday 4 p.m.	Thursday 4.30 p.m.	
Males Monday 5.15 p.m.	Thursday 5.15 p.m.	

Chest Clinics held at the North Devon Infirmary.

Tuesday	9. 0 a.m. - 1. 0 p.m. 2. 0 p.m. - 4. 0 p.m.	Clinic and X-Ray Examinations
Thursday	9. 0 a.m. - 1. 0 p.m. 2. 0 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.	
Friday	9. 0 a.m. - 1. 0 p.m. 2. 0 p.m. - 4. 0 p.m.	A.P. Refills

7. LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The main Laboratory is situated at 7, Dix's Field, Exeter and Dr. Moore is the Director. It is completely installed with the necessary equipment for bacteriological examinations of all kinds. Its diagnostic and consultative services are available for all patients. Bacteriological examinations of water and milk are also carried out. The service is extremely valuable and is widely used by the medical practitioners.

There is also a Pathological Laboratory at the former Barnstaple and North Devon Dispensary building in Barnstaple with a full-time Pathological and Technical Staff to meet the needs of the whole North Devon area.

The Blood Bank, which was formerly at the North Devon Infirmary has been transferred to this Laboratory.

8. AMBULANCE SERVICES.

Under Section 27 of the National Health Service Act, 1946 the Local Health Authority (i.e. the Devon County Council) is responsible for the provision of an Ambulance Service, and the Devon Health Committee have arranged for this to be provided through the agency of the St. John Ambulance Association. Under the scheme an ambulance station has been established at South Molton. The districts served are South Molton Borough and South Molton Rural District. The Hospital Car Service, also under the Devon County Council, is available on application to the Hospitals, and the Ambulance Service is empowered to hire cars in urgent cases when an ambulance is not necessary.

9. IMMUNIZATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

During the year 35 children received Primary Injections and 64 received Reinforcing Injections.

10. VACCINATION.

The following are the figures for 1953:—
Under 1 year—9, 1-4 years—1, 5-14—2, 15 years and over—7.

11. HOME HELP SERVICE.

There are 6 Home Helps operating in South Molton Borough and Rural District and the scheme is run by the Devon County Council. During the year help was rendered in 28 cases as follows:—Maternity 10; Tuberculosis 1; Old Age and Chronic Sick 12; Others 5.

Any case recommended by a Doctor, Health Visitor or District Nurse is entitled to a Home Help. The Home Helps do any work in the house normally done by the housewife. I am glad to note that the service is growing, it is much appreciated by all concerned.

12. PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOMES.

There is one District Nurse in the Borough who also acts as a Midwife.

I desire to thank the Town Clerk, Mr. Settle and Mr. Nex for their valuable help to me.

F. J. H. MARTIN.

CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Water Supply.

The supply is obtained from the gathering grounds on the foothills of Exmoor and from the Holywell Spring and is impounded in the Holywell Reservoir which contains approximately 7,000,000 gallons. It is piped therefrom to the Filter House at Westland Bridge and is passed through three Candy Pressure Filters and thence by trunk main of 6ins. diameter to the Service Reservoirs in North Road, South Molton, the Service Reservoirs being two in number and containing 340,000 gallons, the water is then distributed through the Town mains which are of varying diameters. The water is sampled and analysed at regular intervals. I am pleased to again report that the Filters and the water supply system generally continue to be maintained in a highly efficient manner by your Waterworks Foreman. Chlorination of the water is being carried out by the drip feed method at the Service Reservoirs and is proving to be satisfactory. A full supply of water has been maintained throughout the year.

Results of Sampling and Analyses.

A total of 12 samples of water have been submitted to the Public Health Laboratory at Exeter, and eight of these were placed in Grade One and the remainder in Grade Two. These results can be regarded as satisfactory.

Chemical Analysis.

Analytical Examination of Water.

Description of Sample.—Sample of water from Holywell Reservoir.

Characters.

Colour—Very slight green tint. *Turbidity*—Clear. *Taste*—Natural. *Odour*—None. *Suspended Matters*—Slight trace of humus of vegetation. A few diatoms and infusorians.

ANALYSIS.

(Parts per Hundred Thousand).

Chlorine present as Chlorides	1.0
Nitrogen present as Nitrites	0
Nitrogen present as Nitrates	0.095
Phosphates	0
Sulphates	
Free Carbon Dioxide	
Total Hardness equivalent to Calcium Carbonate ...	3.2
Temporary Hardness (annulled by boiling)	0.5
Permanent Hardness (not altered by boiling) ...	2.7
Saline Ammonia	0.0010
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.0024
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hours at 27 deg. C	0.02
Oxygen absorbed immediately	
Lead	0
Copper	0
Zinc	0
Iron in solution	0
Iron in sedimentary form	0
Manganese	0
Total Solid Constituents	5.0

Organic Matter observed in igniting the Solid Constituents, None.

Hydrogen Ion Concentration equivalent to pH ... 6.4

Sewage Disposal.

The first portion of the new Sewage Disposal Plant at Mole Bridge is working very satisfactorily and the effluent is of a high standard.

The Engineers are proceeding with the plans and specification for the second part of the sewerage scheme which will when completed provide for the treatment of sewage from the whole town.

Sewers.—The sewers in the Borough are generally in good order.

Housing.

12 Traditional Houses were erected and tenanted during the year. 7 Private Bungalows and Houses have been completed during the year.

106 Traditional Houses and Bungalows, and 16 Non-Traditional Houses have been erected since World War II and a contract is about to be let for a further 6 Houses and 4 Bungalows.

Plans.

8 Plans for new buildings and extensions have been dealt with under Planning and Byelaws during the year.

Sanitation.

Number of Houses inspected	7
Number of preliminary notices served under Public Health Acts	4
Number of Statutory Notices served under Public Health Acts	0

Chief defects that have been dealt with are : —

Roof repairs, and made watertight.
Lavatory Pans renewed.
Choked drains.
Stoves and cooking appliances renewed.
General repairs to walls, floors and ceilings.
Improvement of domestic water supplies. A considerable number of new services have been laid.

Few Public Health nuisances have occurred in the Borough during the year and those which have occurred have mostly been dealt with informally and remedied.

Refuse Collection and Disposal.

Domestic refuse is collected regularly in the built-up areas of the Borough, and monthly collections are made from outlying Farms and Hamlets. Refuse is carted to the dump at Hacche Road and the the dump is regularly treated for the destruction of Rodents. The Refuse Dump at Hacche Road is now incapable of receiving much more refuse, and arrangements will be made to acquire additional land at the tip.

Bakehouses.

Bakehouses are inspected periodically. With the co-operation of all owners considerable improvements have been effected or are still being carried out. Generally speaking the whole of the Bakehouses in the Borough are in good order.

Factories and Workshops.

Factories and Workshops are inspected periodically and generally are found to be kept as required by the Factory Acts. Owners have from time to time been asked to make minor improvements and have readily done so.

Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are enforced by the Borough :—

Number on Register	14
Number of Inspections	16
Notices served	Nil

Factories in which Section 7 is enforced by the Borough :—

Number on Register	24
Number of Inspections	25
Notices served	Nil
Cases in which defects were found and remedied	3

Meat and Foods condemned as unfit for human consumption

Unsound food including meat is surrendered by Traders and a Certificate is given. The unsound food is marked with a green dye and is given to persons to boil for poultry and pig food.

The following foods have been surrendered as unfit for human consumption :—

Meat and Offal :—

English Beef	130 lbs. 8 ozs.
Mutton	18 lbs.
English Pork	30 lbs.
1 Pigs Pluck	7½ ozs.

Tinned Foods	*No. of Tins*	*Weight*
Meat	60	52 lbs. 12 ozs.
Vegetables	32	23 lbs. 12 ozs.
Fruits	450	508 lbs. 1 oz.
Milk	20	
Fish	1	8 ozs.
Soups	29	8 lbs. 3 ozs.

Other Foods

Hams	130 lbs. 6 ozs.

Total weight of food surrendered and accepted as unfit for human consumption: 6 cwts. 1 qr. 7 lbs.

Inspection of Food Premises.

During the year a number of visits were made to Food Premises in the Borough, and the condition generally was found to be good. All premises requiring registration receive regular visits and all are maintained in good condition. Some improvements have been made by Traders at the request of the Department.

Ice Cream

Only one firm in the Borough manufactures Ice Cream and samples taken have been entirely satisfactory.

Slaughterhouses.

No Slaughterhouses are in use in the Borough.

Meat Inspection.

Supplies of meat for the Borough come from Barnstaple where it is examined by the Borough Sanitary Inspector and his staff before leaving the Abattoir. Any butcher who has meat which he considers to be unfit for sale reports the fact to my Department and appropriate action is taken. Any unsound meat is usually sent to the Kennels of local Staghounds.

Prevention of Damage by Pest Act.

The following methods for the destruction of Rats and Mice are taken: The Refuse Tip at Hacche Road, the Sewage Outfalls at Mole Bridge and West End Terrace are periodically treated by pre baiting and then with poisoned baits and the results are

satisfactory. A number of private houses and business premises have been visited on receipt of complaints, and disinfestation has been carried out.

I have again to acknowledge with thanks the help Mr. Nex has given me during the year in connection with the investigation of sanitary complaints, water sampling and chlorination, inspection of food premises, inspection of unsound meat and foods, and in numerous other matters.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

HAROLD SETTLE,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.